He who seeth the Supreme Being existing alike imperishable in all perishable things, sees indeed. —*The Bhagavad-Gita*

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SYMPTOMS OF TRANSITION

WHAT happens at the ends and beginnings of cycles of human development? Along with the breakup of old forms and the release of energy to new combinations and alignments, there are consolidations and fusing expressions of what has been gained or learned during the period coming to an end. Just as a man, when he goes to sleep at night, has an inclination to review the past day, measuring its accomplishments and summing the progress it represents, so, at the conclusion of a cultural cycle, it is natural for there to be flowerings of various sorts.

In the present, it is evident that the nations of Europe are undergoing radical changes in social form and outlook. The prevailing concept of "self" is gradually altering, due to the impact of various events, not the least of which have been the disturbances and dislocations caused by recent wars. One notable effect has been the decline in the spirit of the Enlightenment—that partial awakening to the potentialities of human capacity and self-determination which reached an initial climax during the revolutionary epoch of the closing years of the eighteenth century. Linked with the promise of scientific discovery and the accompanying intellectual liberation of the experimental approach, the political movement generated by dreams of a self-governing, progressive society spread optimistic anticipations of unlimited future development, in which the material ills and economic confinements of the feudal

past would be entirely eliminated, with private ambitions and hopes uniting with social idealism to create an age of emancipation and plenty for mankind.

The dream was not fulfilled. Demonic elements of human nature exploded with a potency unsuspected by the visionaries of the Enlightenment, and the crimes of social systems turned sour by angry, nationalist egotisms, and of others powered by the rebellious moral frenzy of materialist revolutionists, wove a destiny which darkened the first half of the twentieth century. It became clear to students of Theosophy that the anticipations recorded in such articles as H.P.B.'s "Karmic Visions" and the profound analysis given in her "Fall of Ideals" were not speculative reflections but blueprints of what would be. Yet out of the agony of these ruthless settlements new currents of thought were born in Europe. One influential theme of the awakening is to be recognized in the gloomy but aspiring broodings of Sören Kierkegaard, who spoke to the growing tip of the European mind, now made sensitive by pain and harrowing feelings of guilt and failure. Kierkegaard's tortured reflections had little to do with Enlightenment optimism. He wrote:

> One must really have suffered very much in the world, and have been very unfortunate before there can be talk of beginning to love one's neighbor. It is only in dying to the joys and the happiness of the world in self-denial that the neighbor comes into existence. One cannot therefore accuse the immediate person of not loving his neighbor, because he is too happy for the "neighbor" to exist for him. No one who clings to earthly life loves his neighbor, that is to say his neighbor does not exist for him.

This statement is a prophetic embodiment of the mood that began to find expression in Europe in consequence of the ghastly experiences of war. Kierkegaard's introspective stoicism was subjected to various transformations by widely differing Existentialist thinkers, most notably men such as Jean Paul Sartre and Albert Camus in France, but the moral tone of this transforming current of self-examination is manifest to all who read. The essential humanist note of individual accountability and responsibility is sounded again and again. The ground of this conviction is existential or intuitive, not metaphysical; the cry of these thinkers is the voice of conscience and outraged human feelings, declaring a desperate integrity in the face of the most hideous rationalizations

of evil the world has known. As men's thoughts turned inward, new conceptions of the validation of individual search and inquiry were born in the work of the phenomenologists of Germany, beginning with Husserl—too abstract and speculative, to be sure, for the average reader, yet all-pervasive in their influence, widely affecting attitudes in clinical psychology and reshaping the assumptions of psychoanalysts. Missing, still, of course, is any clear idea of human egoity, yet a web of thought has been spun by these thinkers which may eventually be recognized as naturally receptive to transcendental affirmations yet to come.

Other lines of awakening to conceptions deeper than those the Enlightenment provided may be identified in the writings of such men as Unamuno, whose *Tragic Sense of Life* restored a depth dimension to the meaning of being human, and of Ortega y Gasset, whose *Revolt of the Masses* and other works renewed the current of Platonic or Socratic philosophizing for a great many in both Europe and America. In Italy Ignazio Silone and Carlo Levi began spreading the resonances of a purified humanism, filled with intuitive perceptions which call upon higher qualities of manhood and responsibility, so long submerged. The nightmare fabric of collectivist salvation is torn to fragments for such writers, and the doctrine of spontaneous moral obligation finds articulate expression in their vivid and engrossing prose.

During the days of the travail of France, when she lay almost impotent under the heel of the Nazi occupation, a talented young woman, Simone Weil, was given refuge in Engand to write an extraordinary book, *The Need for Roots*. This work may be read as an ennobling swan song of French lucidity and high culture, declaring the moral foundations of human life. Simone Weil's *The Poem of Force,* composed during the early days of the war, amounts to a brilliant epitaph for all righteous violence, in the form of a musing commentary on Homer's *Iliad*. In this essay Simone Weil makes the Eastern idea of Karma one keynote of her inquiry into the meaning and inhumanity of war. She died quite young, as sometimes happens with richly promising individuals who work with a clear sense of mission to the world, yet it is not too much to say that her contributions to the shaping of future thought have raised the general moral awareness of Western man to a higher level.

We may think that these regenerating tendencies in European

culture are but heralds of more far-reaching changes, and that the actual transformations which they anticipate will come into being through the agencies of numerous other causes now difficult to discern. Today, the surface of current events is roughened and confused by successive turbulences which are as inevitable in birth as in decline and death. Moreover, we have made only a few random samplings of an enormously complex process involving numerous psycho-moral vectors of change, the origins of which are largely hidden from view. However, a reading of the article referred to, H.P.B.'s "The Fall of Ideals," might enable the reader to recognize the pertinence of such brief notes on the contemporary scene, and to extend the study by collecting further examples of the agents and processes of transition.

Another sort of change may be inspected in the alterations of culture in the United States. Announced for appearance in March is an entirely new edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica,* described as "its first major innovation in more than 200 years of publication." This new edition, said to have been in preparation for many years, will have three major divisions. First will be a section which considers "all knowledge" in ten major subdivisions, each being covered by a long essay on its contents. The second section, identified as written at the college freshman or sophomore level, has the form of a ten-volume "dictionary" with articles of not more than 750 words on all the subjects listed. The third section provides nineteen volumes intended to open the way to the entire world of mature learning, "with articles from 750 to 250,000 words each." The more elementary section provides references to treatments in the nineteen volumes of advanced learning.

A manifest irony attaches to this enterprise, which reaches toward realization of the Enlightenment dream of a vast compilation of all that men have been able to accumulate as knowledge about the world, with easy or convenient access made possible by careful organization. The irony grows out of the fact that the present is a time of dawning realization that finite systems of knowledge, dependent for their validity, coherence, and explanatory power upon the assumptions of a single historical epoch, are fated to break down whenever the experience of mankind penetrates to areas or levels at which the assumptions of the system no longer apply. This is a recognition which grows out of such studies of scientific or Enlightenment epistemology as Thomas

Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (MIT Press), J. Bronowski's clarifying analysis of the implications of Gödel's theorem (see his article in the *American Scholar* for the Spring of 1966), and Michael Polanyi's epoch-making work, *Personal Knowledge*. There are, in short, "hidden contradictions" in every time-bound system or theory of knowledge, which eventually emerge and necessitate either the construction of a new system or a modification of the old one, by means of the addition of new axioms or first principles. Bronowski's article amounts to a rigorous assimilation and statement of the growing consensus among theoretical physicists and other scientific thinkers that the observer or subject in scientific inquiry is an essential—and possibly incommensurable—factor of all scientific knowledge, it following that the world of nature, once thought to be solidly "objective," must be examined as in large part a human creation or construct. As said in *The Secret Doctrine* (I, 329), "the phenomena of *our* plane are the creation of the perceiving Ego—the modifications of its own subjectivity." In short, it has now become evident that whatever we say about the world bears the decisive imprint of our own assumptions, and that, finally, however logical and seemingly well-grounded those assumptions are, they are subject to change and must indeed eventually change. Bronowski voices the impact of this realization by saying:

> In mathematics and science, it is a surprise to find oneself bounded by these theorems; it is not at all obvious, and indeed is unexpected, to learn that mathematical and scientific statements cannot be wholly cleared of self-references. . . . But it is evident from the outset that philosophy is full of self-references, and therefore that, if the breakdown in the machinery of logic has its origin in self-reference, then philosophy is surely subject to it. Indeed it is clear that, while mathematics and science are subject to it only from time to time, when a new step has to be taken, philosophy is subject to it severely and constantly—because self-reference is built into its very method.

Here we have a discovery which, in Theosophy, may be rendered into an understanding of the necessity of living the life in order to know the doctrine. Indeed, the doctrine, as doctrine, is but an intellectual formulation, a mere outline or map, which has to be transformed by the inquirer into the tool of self-discovery. He cannot make this transformation without acting upon or *using* the form of knowledge or teaching, since only in this way can he

accomplish what Bronowski calls the act of self-reference. What is an epistemological discovery for Bronowski, the mathematician and scientific thinker, has clear ethical and moral content in relation to the fully developed conception of knowledge which is the goal of the pursuer of philosophic truth.

Meanwhile, the relativity of finite systems was made evident, many years ago, by H.P.B.:

> Whatever plane our consciousness may be acting in, both we and the things belonging to that plane are, for the time being, our only realities. As we rise in the scale of development we perceive that during the stages through which we have passed we mistook shadows for realities, and the upward progress of the Ego is a series of progressive awakenings, each advance bringing with it the idea that now, at last, we have reached "reality"; but only when we shall have reached the absolute Consciousness, and blended our own with it, shall we be free from the delusions produced by Maya. (S. D. I. 40.)

Bronowski illustrates a limited or technical form of this realization. A more positive version is available in a recent volume by C. West Churchman, *The Design of Inquiring Systems* (Basic Books, 1971), in which the author surveys various theories and systems of knowledge, starting with the Monadology of Leibniz, proceeding to examination of the Lockean, Kantian, and Hegelian systems, and ending with recognition that no system can hope to understand itself, and that the human being, the *system-maker,* is required to contribute the bridge to self-understanding, since he, the man, is beyond or outside the system in virtue of having created it. What then is the function of a system of inquiry? It is, Churchman says, to convert inner inspiration into logical thinking, in order to expand or apply its content. "Thus intuition," as he puts it, "is always important in the development of the inquiring system, but the challenge to the thinking designer is to rationalize the operations of the intuition, so that the creativity of one man becomes simply the methodology of another; the great idea of one generation becomes the mundane operating basis of the following." In this statement we see the gradual transformation of the subjective into the objective, by means of comprehension of the dynamics involved, and also a process similar to that which Buckle described as the rule of historical progress (quoted by H.P.B., *S.D.* I, 298).

There is much encouragement in these signs of philosophical

growth among scientific thinkers, as though the integrities of their discipline are now enjoying a belated fruition. We might note, in this connection, that H.P.B. suggested (*S.D.* II, 152) that science would eventually begin to accept the occult point of view, although, at the outset, divorced from its metaphysical assumptions, which these investigators are hardly ready to adopt. Michael Polanyi, who, like Bronowski and other European scientific thinkers, found a haven for working freely in England, is a scientist for whom moral conceptions lie at the foundation of both science and society. Taking the work of all these men together, it seems apparent that we are approaching the verge of a revolution in scientific thinking, a great change developing from urgencies perceived in psychological and moral terms. There should, in other words, be a widely accepted form of science that is not materialistic in its assumptions, before the century is over.

Other broad signs of change may be discerned in many parts of the world. The extraordinary example and comparative success of Gandhi in introducing the essentially Buddhist conception of harmlessness in relation to social and political objectives has been a virtual miracle of the twentieth century, accomplished in what must be acknowledged as darkly unpropitious times. Looking to China, we may see massive reforms in the combination of industry and agriculture in the great communes of that country—an achievement to which socio-economic reformers in the West are pointing with increasing admiration. There is also, in China, the respect shown by the medical faculties of universities for the traditional forms of healing in China—using herbs and acupuncture; and a similar regard for Ayurvedic medicine is found in India. Jugoslavia has set an example to the world in developing semi-autonomous regional divisions for socio-economic independence and self-sufficiency, while Japan, despite its extraordinary application of modern industrialism, has nonetheless proved wiser than any Western nation in working out employer-employee relations which depend upon cooperation and mutual trust instead of militantly organized and regulated adversary encounters and adjustments. The Scandinavian countries have come close to putting the rest of the world to shame by their intelligent balance of capital and labor, and their determined use of the mechanisms of the welfare state in behalf of social justice.

Meanwhile, one sees the increasing respect shown for H. P.

Blavatsky in the growing sale of her books, and the sometimes thoughtful quotation from her writings in popular magazines. An example of the latter is the article, "Mysterious Pyramids around the World," by Warren Smith, in *Saga* for last October—an interesting and useful survey of the remains of pyramidal structures discovered in numerous parts of the world, with comment quite openly based on statements found in *The Secret Doctrine*. The writer draws directly on H.P.B. in writing of the Bamian statues in Central Asia and for the idea that the Egyptian pyramids housed chambers of initiation as well as serving as symbolic records of astronomic and other knowledge. This article makes it clear that pyramids are still being discovered in untraveled places, as for example in a remote area of the province of Shensi, China, west of an ancient walled city which is older than Peking.

We have more than enough news and reports of the disintegrations of Western civilization, while political failures and embarrassments multiply with each day of reporting. It seems well to realize that behind these evidences of precipitous decline, other activities are burgeoning, some of them animated by the positive content of new ways of thought and life. The psychic disorders and breakdowns are inescapable realities and signs of the cycle, but other aspects of change, some few of which we have noted, are suggestive of the gathering strength of longer-term trends which are slowly emerging to give new and better shape to human affairs.

Man has to *know himself, i.e.,* acquire the *inner* perceptions which never deceive, before he can master any absolute truth. Absolute truth is *the symbol of Eternity,* and no *finite* mind can ever grasp the eternal, hence, no truth in its fulness can ever dawn upon it.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

ROUNDS AND RACES

[The second (unsigned) part of the article titled "Evolution" which appeared in THEOSOPHY for February was said in an introductory note to have appeared in the *Path* for July, 1892, possibly as a continuation of the article by Mr. Judge with this title which was printed in the *Path* for August, 1890. There is good reason, however, as a correspondent points out, for thinking that this second part from the July, 1892, *Path* was not by Mr. Judge, as the present article, signed "Alpha" and first published in the *Path* for December, 1892, will suggest. In the article which appears below, the writer speaks of the "confusion and even contradiction" which may result from ill-chosen words in discussion of the evolution of the planetary chain. Cause for confusion may be recognized in the second part of the article which appeared last February, where it is said, "We are now the Fifth Race engaged in going round the whole chain . . . We must go round the whole chain of seven planets three times more before, as a race, we are perfected." The next paragraph speaks of Mankind as then starting on another series of Seven Rounds as the Sixth Race, and repeating this as the Seventh Race, "thus bringing the grand evolution for this chain to a perfect end." In contrast to this bewildering view is the statement by "Alpha" that the life-wave does not pass to Globe E until "seven root-races shall have finished their course here," which is confirmed by what is said on page 160 of Vol. I of *The Secret Doctrine*. A remark by Mr. Judge in "The Earth Chain of Globes" (THEOSOPHY 59:359) is also helpful: " 'To go around' the seven globes does not mean that one passes necessarily from one place to another, but indicates a change from one condition to another, just as we might say that a man 'went the whole round of sensations'." This makes comprehensible the remarks about "*fifth* and *sixth* Rounders" (*S.D.* I, 161-62). At best the subject of the Rounds and Races is difficult and obscure, as every student knows. It cannot be pretended that the explanations afforded by the present article, "Rounds and Races," and the other statements by Mr. Judge and H.P.B., will relieve all the perplexity felt on this question, but study of this material and pages 159-191 of Vol. I of *The Secret Doctrine* will do much to hold that perplexity to a minimum.—Editors, THEOSOPHY.]

A FUNDAMENTAL axiom in Theosophy is that no one should accept as unquestionably true any statement of fact, principle, or theory which he has not tested for himself. This

does not exclude a reasonable reliance upon testimony; but only that blind credulity which sometimes passes for faith. As we understand the rule, it is that we should at all times keep a clear and distinct boundary between what we know, and what we only accept provisionally on the testimony of those who have had larger experience until we reach a point of view from which we can see its truth. We owe it to ourselves to enlarge the sphere of clear knowledge and to push back as far as possible the boundary of opinion and hypothesis.

The realm of knowledge has various departments. Our physical senses furnish us one class of knowledge; our intellectual powers investigate another field on mathematical lines; and yet another faculty enables us to apprehend ethical teachings and to trace them to their true basis in Karma. That we have other faculties, now largely latent, which when developed will enable us to enter other fields of observation and investigation, is beginning to be seen and appreciated. Among the subjects which man may thus in the future examine for himself is a large block of truth concerning evolution, the out-breathing of the Great Breath, the birth and development of a chain of globes, and of human life thereon, some part of which has been imparted to us by those who claim to know, and which is chiefly useful, perhaps, for the light which it throws on our surroundings, our destiny, and our duty.

The grander sweeps of this block of truth are given to us in the barest outline, and not until our present physical earth is reached do we find anything like detailed information. From the hints given out, however, and reasoning according to the doctrine of correspondences, "as above, so below," we may plausibly infer many things in regard to other globes and other systems; but such flights can hardly be taken with much profit or advantage until we become thoroughly familiar with the things that are revealed in regard to our immediate surroundings.

In reading what has been written about the evolution of our planetary chain, it becomes apparent that some writers either did not have clear views on the subject, or that confusion and even contradiction have resulted from difficulty in finding words adapted to its expression and in using the words chosen in a strictly consistent manner. The article entitled "Evolution" found on page 117 of THE PATH for July, 1892, is, it seems to me, open to this objection; and I ask leave of the Editor to contribute briefly to

the work of making the subject more clear.

The planetary chain consists of seven companion globes, which for convenience of reference are named from the first seven letters of the alphabet, A, B, C, D, E, F, and G. We occupy globe D, the fourth in the chain. The course of evolution begins on globe A, and proceeds by regular stages through globes B, C, D, E, etc. In the beginning, globe A was first evolved, and life received a certain degree of development upon it; then globe B came into existence, and the life-wave removed from globe A to B, where it went forward another stage; then globe C was evolved and received the life wave for a still further stage in its progress; and so on, until at the end of the first round globe G was evolved and furnished the field for the highest development attainable in that round.

The first round—the first tour of the life-wave through the seven globes from A to G—having been completed, the monads—the life wave—passed again to globe A, and commenced the second round, or the second tour through the chain. Without following out details, it is enough to say that three such rounds have been completed, and the fourth round has commenced its sweep and is still in progress; and that we now occupy globe D in this fourth round. Three times the life-wave has passed from globe A to globe G; and has now reached globe D in its fourth tour through the chain.

Now, leaving entirely out of sight for the present what has happened during the former three rounds, and on globes A, B, and C in this fourth round, let us consider what has happened on globe D since the life-wave reached it this fourth time; prefacing, however, the general statement that this globe will be exhausted and the life-wave be ready to pass from it to globe E when seven root-races shall have finished their course here. Each root-race is divided into seven sub-races; and each sub-race into seven family-races; and so on; these divisions and subdivisions following each the other, and not coëxisting, except as an earlier race or division of a race may survive its time and overlap a subsequent race or division. Since the life-wave reached globe D in this fourth round, four root-races have run their course upon it, and the fifth root-race has reached its fifth subdivision or sub-race, of which we are part. This fifth sub-race is said to be preparing in America for transition or transformation into the sixth sub-race: it

is not entirely clear whether we in the United States to-day belong to the seventh family-race of the fifth sub-race, or to the first family race of the sixth sub-race. It seems certain that we are near the transition point, unless there must be an intervening pralayic period.

The sixth and seventh sub-races of the fifth root-race must run their course, and these must be followed by the sixth and seventh root-races with their various subdivisions, before the life-wave passes from our present globe D and begins its further evolution on globe E. From analogy we may infer that seven great races, with their sub-races, etc., will be necessary to complete the work of that globe; and the same for globes F and G, before the fourth round shall be concluded and the life-wave be ready to pass to globe A for the beginning of the fifth round.

Thus the planetary chain consists of seven globes; the life-wave makes during the existence of the chain seven complete tours of the chain from globe A to globe G, these tours being called rounds; the life-wave remains on each globe after reaching it in each round, until it completes seven root races, divided into forty-nine sub-races and into three hundred and forty-three family-races.

It should be remembered that the flow of the life-wave is not continuous: it has its ebb as well as its flood. There is a period of rest or pralaya after the close of each round before another is commenced: a pralaya after each globe in the round; similarly each race, sub-race, etc., is preceded and followed by its pralayic rest. The purpose of this paper is not to develop the entire scheme in all its completeness, even if that were possible; but to bring out as sharply as may be the general outlines, and especially to note the distinction between rounds and races, the seven rounds being seven circuits of the entire chain, while the seven root-races are seven life-waves (or seven repetitions of the same wave) which consecutively flow and ebb on each globe before leaving it. There are seven root-races on each globe; forty-nine root-races in each round; three hundred and forty-three root-races in the seven rounds which complete the life of the planetary chain.

In studying this subject, it must be borne in mind that, while numerous passages in the *Secret Doctrine* refer to universal cosmogony and the evolution of the solar system and of our planetary chain, still the bulk of that work is devoted to the evolution of humanity on globe D in the fourth round only. It must also

be remembered that the groups of monads discussed in "Theosophical Gleanings" in vol. vi of *Lucifer* are not to be taken as identical with the seven root-races through which the monadic host passes on each globe in each round.

The foregoing outline of the course of evolution through the SEVEN ETERNITIES of a maha-manvantara is mechanical and clumsy; it is only a skeleton, which must be clothed upon with muscles and sinews by reading between the lines before its true relations and proportions can be understood. The following quotations from *The Secret Doctrine* will perhaps throw a ray of light upon the connection of the globes of the chain: "It only stands to reason that the globes which overshadow our earth must be on different and superior planes. In short, as globes, they are in COADUNITION but not IN CONSUBSTANTIALITY WITH OUR EARTH". (The capitals are in the text). Vol. I, p. 166.

"When 'other worlds' are mentioned . . . the Occultist does not locate these spheres either *inside* or *outside* our earth . . . for their location is nowhere in the space *known* to and conceived by the profane. They are, as it were, blended with our world, interpenetrating it and interpenetrated by it." Vol. I, p. 605.

In a foot note to page 265 of Walker's work on Reincarnation, (*Novell's edition*), the opinion is expressed that the figures (seven planets, seven rounds, seven races, etc.), are only symbols; even so: if they are symbols, they must no less be clearly apprehended before the truths symbolized can be grasped.

—ALPHA

PERFECTION IN PRACTICE

By concentrating his mind upon the true nature of the soul as being entirely distinct from any experiences, and disconnected from all material things, and dissociated from the understanding, a knowledge of the true nature of the soul itself arises in the ascetic.

The powers hereinbefore described are liable to become obstacles in the way of perfect concentration, because of the possibility of wonder and pleasure flowing from their exercise, but are not obstacles for the ascetic who is perfect in the practice enjoined.

—PATANJALI'S YOGA APHORISMS

FROM "THE THEOSOPHICAL FORUM"

Healing and White and Black Magic: II

In January Forum *H.P.B. is quoted as saying, "This is all the secret. Half, if not two-thirds, of all our ailings and diseases are the fruit of our imagination and fears." In the same number W.Q.J. says, "The greater number are due to strong physical Karma," and "are entirely beyond the reach of imagination." Will the* Forum *point out the reconciliation?*

W.Q.J.—It is quite true that I said in reply to [another question] that the greater number of diseases are those which are due to physical Karma and beyond the reach of the imagination rather than to the reaction of the imagination upon the body, and that H.P.B. in *Lucifer* said that "half, if not two thirds, of our ailings and diseases are the fruit of our imagination," but there seems to be no great contradiction since both statements were general, and in the last Forum mine was declared to be in respect to a rough classification and not to a specific accurate one. H.P.B.'s expression *"half if not two-thirds"* is well known to be an idiom which means much or little. It is one of those constantly used when one is not speaking of exact quantities. Hence it need not be set over against mine. But if any think it important, then let them consider that I did not say what I did as to the proportions. However, there are no statistics obtainable as to the two classes of causes for disease, and it is very evident that H.P.B. had no thought of being mathematically exact, nor was there need for her to be. Her remark was not to point out proportions but to show how strong imagination may be and how, just as I sought to point out that when the direction of the mind is altered the strain is taken off from the body and nature makes a further change, instead of our minds bringing about a state of health. A careful glance at the substantial point aimed at in the reply criticized would have revealed nothing of the nature of contradiction between writer and H.P.B.

Is it unwise or wrong to say mentally to a person "You are well," or "You are virtuous," "Your higher nature can control your lower"? Is that kind of mental treatment a wrong use of power if the motive is pure and unselfish?

W.Q.J.—Buddha and Jesus—two great teachers—performed cures.

Not by assertion and denial but by scientific use of power. To the wicked whom they cured they said "sin no more." Both taught that the cause of sorrow was evil thought leading to evil act, but neither said that that existed not which was plain before one's eyes. They recognized the existence of fact, of law, of reason. In some cases they could not cure. Why? Because the causes working on the sufferer were too strong for them. Mere optimism which says all is good is of a kind that grows out of sentiment unsupportable by reason. We ought to do all the good we can, but that does not mean we should blind our minds to the relativity which is necessary for cognition.

Is it intended to be conveyed, in answer to [a previous question], that true Occultists and sincere Theosophists would countenance or practice any lawful arts of White Magic for pay?

W.Q.J.—My reply to this would be that the taking of pay for any act of "White Magic" is untheosophical and injurious to the taker. The example of all great men known to history or Scripture is against the taking of pay in such cases. Jesus would not take it, nor Apollonius, nor Buddha, although, if persons insisted, they were allowed to donate food or for food. Buddha depended upon voluntary contributions of food, and accepted the gift of a garden or park from a rich man for the use of the disciples, but not for himself. A "right means of livelihood" does not permit the practise of powers belonging to another plane than this for pay. If we have to starve unless we take pay for what the querist calls "arts of White Magic," then, I say, starve, and you will be better off.

The accepting of pay at once takes away the character of White Magic from the act and makes it Black, for there is a selfish purpose in receiving the pay which no amount of argument or self-cheating can remove. There are many degrees of "Black Magic," running all the way from effort to get money for food up to deliberate, conscious work for self alone. If one has the natural gift of healing and then takes pay for its use, he is cheating. This is wide apart from the practise of medicine, which you have to give effort, time, and money to acquire.

But if a natural healer or a "spiritual healer"—to use a most absurd term now in vogue in America—practises healing, and takes of alms only enough for sustenance, there is no Black Magic. But all such healers can ask themselves if they have made money, saved money, bought property, lived in luxury on the proceeds of their

art or practice—or whatever they call it—and, if they have, then certainly they have "robbed the gods," who gave freely a power and compelled no pay. The "gods" see these things, and have a time and place when and where the stolen property has to be accounted for.

How can a "Black Magician" be known? How should he be treated,—as a part of the Universal Brotherhood?

W.Q.J.—This question comes from America. It is premature, and very much in the nature of "crossing a bridge before you reach it." It also seems to indicate either a loose use of the term "black magician" or a total ignorance of what such a being is, as well as a forgetfulness of what has often been stated,—that a black magician is the efflorescence of an age.

Such a being as this is one who has acquired knowledge of recondite laws of nature such as those known to the White Adepts, and who uses that knowledge for purely selfish purposes. He is the triumph of selfishness, not in that degree which we so easily recognize about us every day in the lives of men of strong will used for selfish ends, but in a degree and to an extent that raise the black adept to a pinnacle of knowledge and power far above the pigmies of this century. He can perform marvels, read thoughts, and do all the wonderful feats usually attributed alone to White Magicians.

How many of such, then, are there to be found now, either among those who study occultism, or in the ranks of the money-loving or fame-pursuing multitude? I have never heard of one. Why, then, need to enquire how one should treat a black magician? If the questioner shall ever be so unfortunate as to meet one of those as yet fabled monsters, he will quite likely have opportunity to reflect that the magician knew more than he did.

It is wiser to turn aside from the aspect of the matter brought up by the question, to the reflection that we all have within us potential black magicians lying in the lower and stronger part of our nature, and that it is important to see that we shall not furnish the opportunity for that potentiality to manifest itself in future lives through the giving way now to selfishness in any of its forms. The black magician, therefore, we are really concerned with is in ourselves. This talk of meeting or dealing with black magicians in the flesh, with powers developed, is purest nonsense.

But it will probably be said, "If there are White Adepts now working in the world, why are there not black ones as well?" The

answer is easy. It is this. Although the full-fledged White and Black Adepts are both the efflorescence of an age, there is a great difference between them. There is as great disparity between them as between day and night, for those who follow the White Law represent spirit, unity, love, while the others represent nothing but self and disruption. Hence, although the Black Magician—in those days when they shall be abroad on the earth—may prolong his life for an enormous period, he is surely silently attacked by nature herself, and at last, when the great day of dissolution, the end of a period of manifestation, arrives, all those black ones left will be swallowed up and annihilated. But at that day all the White Adepts, those called by the Hindus "Jivanmukta," although absorbed into Brahma are still in possession of consciousness, and will come out at the new day just as powerful as when the night came on. Hence as the day of Brahma is divided into the four Ages—of which Kali Yuga is the last, the White Adepts alone are known or in existence in the ages preceding Kali Yuga, and in that age the Karma fitted to bring forth Black Adepts begins to act, and the seeds sown long ago sprout up more and more as the years of Kali Yuga roll on. Now as that dark age has 432,000 years, and only 5,000 of those have passed by, there has not yet been time to evolve the real black magician. But this civilization preeminently shows the seeds as sprouting, and nowhere with greater power than in America. Here the national characteristic is individualism, and that existing as a tendency of the nature will differentiate some day into individualism concentrated into some few men. Imagine this concentration as occurring in a future century when wonderful advances will have been made in knowledge of great forces of nature, and you can easily see without any need of prescience the future black magician.

Is the use of hypnotism for intended good, as in the case of surgical operations, looked upon with disfavor by Theosophists? What relation have the investigation and practice of hypnotism, when only good is intended, to the 3rd object of the Theosophical Society?

W.Q.J.—Replying in part to this question, one can only give a personal opinion, and mine is that hypnotism should be prohibited by law. No one but some very few high-minded and learned physicians should be allowed to practice it. I would as quickly prohibit the general mass of physicians from using it as the general mass of the public, for I regard it as a dangerous and injurious power. The

great Charcot who has popularized it says he would have only competent physicians use it. In the present age of black selfishness I would vote for its total seclusion from use for the present.

(Questions and answers included in this installment are reprinted from the following issues of the *Theosophical Forum,* in this sequence: March, 1892; March, 1892; September, 1890; July, 1889; December, 1890.)

Knowledge through the Mysteries

Enq. Are we to regard Theosophy in any way as a revelation?
Theo. In no way whatever—not even in the sense of a new and direct disclosure from some higher, supernatural, or, at least, *superhuman beings;* but only in the sense of an "unveiling" of old, very old, truths to minds hitherto ignorant of them, ignorant even of the existence and preservation of any such archaic knowledge.

It has become "fashionable," especially of late, to deride the notion that there ever was, in the *mysteries* of great and civilized peoples, such as the Egyptians, Greeks, or Romans, anything but priestly imposture. Even the Rosicrucians were no better than half lunatics, half knaves. Numerous books have been written on them; and tyros, who had hardly heard the name a few years before, sallied out as profound critics and Gnostics on the subject of alchemy, the fire-philosophers, and mysticism in general. Yet a long series of the Hierophants of Egypt, India, Chaldea, and Arabia are known, along with the greatest philosophers and sages of Greece and the West, to have included under the designation of wisdom and divine science all knowledge, for they considered the base and origin of every art and science as *essentially* divine. Plato regarded the *mysteries* as most sacred, and Clemens Alexandrinus, who had been himself initiated into the Eleusinian mysteries, has declared "that the doctrines taught therein contained in them the end of all human knowledge." Were Plato and Clemens two knaves or two fools, we wonder, or—both?

—H. P. Blavatsky

letters · questions · comment

If we do not know, i.e., cannot remember, what causes led to the conditions we encounter in the present existence, how can we avoid unconsciously making new causes now that will have undesirable effects at a later time?

The difficulty proposed by this question seems to arise from a feeling that it is somehow "unfair" to be surrounded by circumstances we have made, and yet be ignorant of how we brought them about. The implication is that this is a result needing consideration by believers in reincarnation. However, we might take note of the fact that a smilar ignorance may easily prevail in relation to causes which we set in motion in our present life. Various violations of nature's laws continue, even though we might discern the unwisdom of this action by an effort to do so. Attachment and desire often operate to blot out memory, as the *Gita* points out. There is even a sense in which attachment and desire obscure the memory of past lives, and of the actions then pursued, since our inability to remember former existences is due in part to our identification with the body we now have. Both memory of the distant egoic past and soul-knowledge are shut out from our awareness by this identification.

The labors undertaken by reincarnating egos entail a certain risk. By assuming bodies of matter, we take on the qualities which proceed from matter, and among these qualities is the cause of forgetfulness—the River of Lethe, the Greeks called it. The Promethean task is to refine the matter, reduce its opacity, and in this way become able to act as spiritual beings even though we have material instruments. These are the "labors of Hercules" and at the same time the ordeals of the neophyte. Learning to break through the veil of matter is neither unnatural nor "unfair," since gaining independent consciousness of the spiritual nature, by "bringing through" our higher awareness on this plane, is precisely the task of human evolution. Speaking of past lives, Krishna said to Arjuna: "Mine are known unto me, but thou knowest not of thine." And two chapters later he tells Arjuna how to reach to knowledge through the "yoga of equanimity."

Deduction through analogy and correspondence is the mind's method of establishing knowledge of what we are unable to consciously remember in this life. We may lack memory of particulars, but we are endowed with reason, which means the capacity to recognize principles and to use them in gaining understanding of action. Mr. Judge defines Karma as the continuation of the *nature* of the act, and here, surely, we have a clue to the mode of understanding causes from experience of their effects. This is impersonal in spirit and a better way for manasic beings to pursue "research" than wondering how to find out what we have done to "deserve" what happens to us.

On the other hand, knowledge of all the effects, whether possible or definite, would certainly be an aid to intelligent action. Knowledge of this kind permits their arrangement so that the factors that are naturally present through Karma may provide the best field for learning and constructive action. This is the way a good teacher creates opportunities for learning. The extent to which we are unconscious of how to do this is itself a Karmic impediment.

In a universe of law, where there is an exact balancing of forces and consequent restoration of equilibrium, there must be continual readjustment, both physical and moral, of our relationship to the rest of life. This raises the question of "desirable" results. It is said that good Karma is what is pleasing to Ishwara, or the Self. If even disastrous circumstances ultimately hold the promise of discovery and growth, how should the cost of the conquest be counted?

Can we leave Karma behind with the acquisition of sufficient knowledge?

In *The Key to Theosophy,* H.P.B. distinguishes between Karma as universal law and Karma in the form of particular modes of action in relation to our states of consciousness. Speaking of the after-death states, she says that Karma acts incessantly: "We reap *in our after-life* only the fruit of that which we have ourselves sown in this." She continues:

> Karma is the child of the terrestrial Ego, the fruit of the actions of the tree which is the objective personality visible to all, as much as the fruit of all the thoughts and even motives of the spiritual "I" . . .

This suggests that it is neither possible nor desirable to "leave

Karma behind"; but that there may be innumerable ways in which equilibrium is both disturbed and restored, some being undoubtedly more contributory to learning and growth than others. In terrestrial life, where Manas is in full contact with matter, the significance of the various states of consciousness is in terms of moral awareness. The important thing is not to "separate" ourselves from matter, but to disentangle our consciousness from its identification with material form.

H.P.B. once observed that "The course of a man's life is the resultant of two forces, namely, his former Karma and his will power." The effort to act in such a way as to recognize the unity inherent in all life would tend to change the psychological impact of Karma from a punitive to an educational influence. In speaking of the will as an all-pervasive force in nature, acting in various ways, Mr. Crosbie suggests that only by self-consciously acting *with* the universal law can Karma be made into the means of progress. He says:

> Will is the energy of Consciousness expressed in action, on any plane of manifestation. There are many aspects of the Will, from the ordinary one which is "the will to live" and is expressed in the automatic physical action, such as the heart-beat, digestion, etc.; that of the actions following on ordinary thought, desires and wants; that which is developed by various forms of practice; to the highest phase, that of the Spiritual Will. This phase is developed by true unselfishness, a sincere and full desire to be guided, ruled and assisted by the Higher Self, and to do that which, and suffer or enjoy whatever, the Higher Self has in store for one by way of discipline or experience.

on the lookout

H.P.B.'s "Training"

The writer of an article on the Sufis in the *Theosophist* for last September remarks in passing that "Russian H. P. Blavatsky seems to have been trained primarily in Tibet, and in Tantric Buddhism rather than Hindu Vedantism (the Hindu predominance which makes the image of 'Theosophy' appear to many as diluted Hinduism came later)." While this comment does not seem intended as a slur, it might have this effect for some readers, and cause confusion for others. In view of the infrequent references to Tantra and Tantric practices in *The Secret Doctrine*—H.P.B. does say in one place (I, 169) that " 'Maha-Vidya,' the great (Magic) knowledge," has now "degenerated into Tantrika worship," and remarks (I, 156) that lunar magic is known to some of the present *tantrikas* of Bengal—those who regard her as the principal source of Theosophy today are likely to turn to the *Theosophical Glossary,* to find that Tantra covers mystical and magical works devoted to worship of the *female* power, personified in Sakti, and that while Tantrika practices connected with this worship are twofold, both white and black, the latter involve licentious and immoral rites. For such reasons, to speak of H.P.B. as "trained" in Tantric Buddhism seems gratuitous.

"Based on Necromancy"

While some modern scholars declare that "Tantric Buddhism is indissolubly connected with the whole body of Mahayana teaching," it is notable that one form of the Tantra—as Edward Conze points out in *Buddhism*—has been opposed by the Yellow Church (Gelukpa followers of Tsong-kha-pa) for centuries, and is hardly Buddhism at all. Conze calls this Red Cap sect the Rnyin-ma-pa, which he says means the "Ancient Ones," and this is plainly the group identified by H.P.B. as the Nyang-na-pa sect "who resisted the reform introduced by Tsong-kha-pa between the latter part of the fourteenth and the beginning of the fifteenth centuries." ("Reincarnations in Tibet," THEOSOPHY 6:530.) Conze believes that the Red Caps had doctrines based on ancient Egypt-

ian magic in its gnostic form, while H.P.B. says that the Shammar sect of the Bhon religion, which had its stronghold in Kam, and converted the Bhutanese, "is not, as wrongly supposed, a kind of corrupted Buddhism, but an off-shoot of the Bhon religion—itself a degenerated remnant of the Chaldean mysteries of old, now a religion entirely based on necromancy, sorcery and soothsaying." She also says: "The addition of Buddha's name in it means nothing." Conze refers readers interested in the Rnyin-ma-pa doctrines to the works of Evans-Wentz, who has translated some of them into English, the most familiar of which concerns the *Bardo*, published as *The Tibetan Book of the Dead.*

Buddhism Adulterated

In any event, the term "Tantric" has a variety of meanings, some suggesting, as H.P.B. says in the *Glossary*, "*the worst form of black magic or sorcery.*" The connection of Tantra in one of its forms with the Bhon beliefs makes pertinent what H.P.B. says of the Bhon or "Red Cap" sect under "Dugpas" in the *Glossary*:

> Before the advent of Tsong-kha-pa in the fourteenth century, the Tibetans, whose Buddhism had deteriorated and been dreadfully adulterated with the tenets of the old *Bhon* religion,—were all Dugpas. From that century, however, and after the rigid laws imposed upon the *Gelukpas* (yellow caps) and the general reform and purification of Buddhism (or Lamaism), the Dugpas have given themselves over more than ever to sorcery, immorality, and drunkenness. Since then the word *Dugpa* has become a synonym of "sorcerer," "adept of black magic," and everything vile. There are few, if any, Dugpas in Eastern Tibet, but they congregate in Bhutan, Sikkim, and the borderlands generally.

Pure Buddhism Not Known

In H.P.B.'s time Orientalists had never penetrated beyond those borderlands and had therefore, she says, given out to the public "*pure Dugpaism* instead of Buddho-Lamaism." She added: "In short Northern Buddhism in its purified, metaphysical form is almost entirely unknown." While this situation has possibly improved in recent years, there may still be considerable doubt about the accuracy of Western scholarship. And it seems likely that if H.P.B. had herself been trained in Tantric Buddhism, she would have said so, and devoted more attention to the subject. We should remember, moreover, that as H.P.B. says in "The Theosophical Society: Its Mission and Its Future," the teachings she brought

are "not Buddhism, but esoteric Budhism." The best evidence of what she did study while in Tibet is to be found in her article, "Thibetan Teachings," posthumously published in *Lucifer* for September, 1894, in which she said:

> . . . though popular Buddhism did not spread in Tibet before the seventh century, the Buddhist initiates of the mysteries and esoteric system of the Aryan Twice-born, leaving their motherland, India, sought refuge with the pre-Buddhistic ascetics; those who had the Good Doctrine, even before the days of Shakya-Muni. These acetics had dwelt beyond the Himalayan ranges from time immemorial. They are the direct successors of those Aryan sages who, instead of accompanying their Brahman brothers in the prehistorical emigration from Lake Manasasarovara across the Snowy Range into the hot plains of the Seven Rivers, had preferred to remain in their inaccessible and unknown fastnesses.

A "Secret" Doctrine

> No wonder, indeed, if the Aryan esoteric doctrine and our Arahat doctrines are found to be almost identical. Truth, like the sun over our heads, is one; but it seems as if this eternal truism must be constantly reiterated to make the dark, as much as the white, people remember it. Only that truth may be kept pure and unpolluted by human exaggerations—its very votaries betimes seeking to adapt it, to pervert and disfigure its fair face to their own selfish ends—it has to be hidden far away from the eye of the profane. Since the days of the earliest universal mysteries up to the time of our great Shakya Tathagata Buddha, who reduced and interpreted the system for the salvation of all, the divine Voice of the Self, known as Kwan-yin, was heard but in the sacred solitude of the preparatory mysteries.

The Undulating Earth

A map printed in the *Arizona Republic* for Oct. 26, 1973, shows the probable vertical movements of the earth's surface throughout the United States, so far as they have been determined by geological survey. In general, America is rising, although some regions are going down rather fast. During the past thirty years the Texas coastal area on the Gulf near Houston has sunk nearly eight feet. A wide band of states from Mexico to Canada, just east of California, is uplifting at a moderate rate. Included in this ascent are Arizona, Utah, most of Nevada, Idaho, Wyoming, and Montana. Minnesota, North Dakota, Iowa, Michigan, and most of Illinois are also rising, likewise Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina

and a lot of Tennessee. Massachusetts is sinking, and also the coastal areas of Virginia and North Carolina. In the West a long strip of land from San Francisco to San Diego in California is sinking close to half an inch a year. This region is a little in from the coast. One of the reasons for subsidence, according to geologists, is the exhaustion of groundwater by pumping. But except for this California area, the earth's surface West of Denver is slowly rising almost everywhere. Cracks in the surface, often noticed, are not caused by elevation but by local subsidence, the geologists say, which results when groundwater is withdrawn from alluvial deposits. The general conclusion from all these studies is that minute changes in the surface of the entire North American continent are going on continually, and, as the headline of the story put it, "terra" is not so "firma" as we've been led to believe. Another way of thinking about this constant movement would be as evidence that the earth has its own sort of life and motion—a motion which sometimes becomes catastrophic when entire continents are made to sink beneath the waves and new land masses are born.

Getting Older and Older

Although newspaper and magazine-article accounts of discoveries of the remains of ancient man are seldom of much interest to Theosophical students, by reason of the superficial approach of journalists as well as the blighting assumptions of most anthropologists, an article in the *Reader's Digest* for last August, summarized from *Tuesday* for Aug. 12, deserves special attention. The writer, Ronald Schiller, is concerned almost entirely with reporting finds which push back the origin of man to a much earlier date than anthropological science has been willing to admit. There is still a great distance to go in time to reach the Theosophical "dating" of the physical genesis of the human species, but the trend, now well established, is pleasant to report. First mentioned by Mr. Schiller is a human skull and bones turned up in Kenya by Richard Leakey, estimated to belong to a period of at least 2.8 million years ago. These remains, dignified as belonging to *Homo erectus* (but not yet *Homo sapiens*), came from a deposit in the East Rudolph Basin and are believed to be more than twice as old as the earliest primate that can be called "man," according to current textbooks.

Ideas of "Immortality"

The textbooks also say that no "modern" men existed 35,000 years ago, but only the "beetle-browed, bandy-legged Neanderthalers." Now, however, evidence has been found that modern men lived in southern Africa, in a cave "on the border between Swaziland and Natal," perhaps as long as 100,000 years ago. These people used "stone implements of curious design" and left various relics such as hammers, wedges, and chisels bruised from long use. One inference from the remains is that these men "believed in the afterlife," and another supposition is that "they spoke a well-developed language, for such ideas as immortality cannot be conveyed by grunts and gestures." The prehistorians engaged in the study of these remains, Adrian Boshier and Peter Beaumont, propose that the man of this period—100,000 years in the past—"had begun to question the purpose of existence and the nature of human destiny, to seek causes and fabricate explanations." This was, they say, "the birth of intellect and the ascendancy of reason." Whatever the support for pressing this kind of evidence in behalf of authentically human remains, the emphasis of these archaeologists on the *thought* of an ancient race recalls Lewis Mumford's appeal to anthropologists to pay more attention to the mental life of "primitive man." Why is it, he asked, "that the lowest existing peoples, who support a hand-to-mouth existence with a few tools and weapons, nevertheless have elaborate ceremonials, a complicated kinship, and a finely differentiated language, capable of expressing every aspect of their existence?" (*American Scholar*, Winter, 1966-67.) Evidence of these capabilities, he contended, is far more important than proof of tool-making skills.

Man's Family "Vine"

These discoveries in Africa, and earlier ones by the Leakeys in 1959, have made Africa, not Asia, "the favored birthplace of the human race," according to the *Tuesday* writer. This opinion may not survive other discoveries still to be made, but Mr. Schiller reports a more fortunate conclusion, relating to the diversity of human and sub-human types:

> However, there is great disagreement as to exactly who begat whom, for it is apparent that several species, both subhuman and human, overlapped each other in time. The descent of man is no longer regarded as a chain with some links missing, but

> rather as a tangled vine whose tendrils loop back and forth as species interbred to create new varieties, most of which died out.

Little quarrel with this statement would be found in *The Secret Doctrine*, although there its import obtains much wider scope. A speculation by Ronald Schiller, little more than an aside in his article, approximates an idea of great importance in the Theosophic view. Commenting on the leg bones associated with the small but "modern" brain case of the skull found in Kenya by Richard Leakey, Schiller says that they are "practically indistinguishable from those of modern man," and he then adds: "It may be that we did not evolve from any of the previously known human types, but descended in a direct line of our own." Put "proto-human" in place of "human," in this sentence, meaning intermediate with an animal forbear or some kind of "missing link," and there would be at least good verbal equivalence with the Theosophical teaching.

The Form, but Not the Substance

In *Saturday Review/World* (Nov. 6, 1973), James Cass comments editorially on an article by Roland S. Barth, who reports in the same issue on the disappointing results of "open education" as an American importation of reforms in English infant schools. Both contributor and editor believe that while the forms of open education have been adopted, the underlying processes that evolved them and made them successful in England have not. American schools have sought reform as another pre-packaged program, a formula for instant success to be put into practice by the teachers. Mr. Cass points out that in England educational changes have traditionally originated with the teachers. He says further:

> The concept of informal education ("Open education" is an American term) developed over a period of years as some teachers in England gave careful attention to studies of child development and observed the way in which children develop and learn. Gradually a fresh view of the nature of childhood emerged, and the knowledge gained was translated into classroom practice as each teacher's convictions evolved. The result is not radically new; it duplicates in large part what the best teachers have always done in the classroom. But each teacher is expected to repeat the process and develop her own convictions about children and the way they learn. The speed with which a teacher arrives at the goal of understanding is not important; some confirmed traditionalists. . . . take several years.

"To Become Themselves"

In contrast is the trend in many American public schools, which is to rate the success of the teacher and her program according to the progress of each pupil, measured by a standard of achievement established for the whole system. Mr. Cass quotes Alice Yardley, an English educator, on the objectives of education:

> Our teachers see children, not as fodder for the state, not as malleable material out of which they make good citizens. They see children as people—little people—who have the right to be individualists, to become themselves and nobody else. They see children as people who have the right to formulate their own beliefs and attitudes toward society and then to live by those beliefs. The challenge for educators is to provide the opportunity for the child's personality to unfold. We see education as a means for providing the opportunity for a child to become the architect of his own personality. This is what we mean by freedom.

Mr. Cass suggests that while importing improvements into our schools may lack the success of original inspiration, we may yet learn from the British that the rewards of encouraging individual ability are well worth the effort involved.

Human Possibilities

The British magazine, the *Economist*, in its issue of Oct. 6, 1973, took note of a new book by Michael Pafford called *Inglorious Wordsworths*, which deals with the responses of ordinary schoolchildren to inner experiences of an inspiring or transcendental character. Wordsworth was articulate in writing of such experiences which came to him, but Mr. Pafford was able to elicit from a number of young teen-agers, to whom he taught English, accounts of their feelings of rapture. The *Economist* reviewer says:

> Because they have given us personal testimony, we are apt to think that only exceptionally sensitive persons—poets, saints, artists—are liable to become suddenly aware of a different dimension of reality. But less articulate people may be subject, at times, to intimations of immortality. There is plenty of evidence that, without any recourse to psychedelic drugs (Mr. Pafford's material was collected before these became fashionable) unexceptional boys and girls do know what it is to be transported into a state of keener consciousness, of joy, fear or serenity; and they treasure such moments and find them of lasting significance.

The collector of these responses, Mr. Pafford, refused to label them as either æsthetic or religious, and he might have borrowed the term, "peak experience," coined by A. H. Maslow, as the most appropriate designation. In any event, such "research" has the value of showing the potentialities of intuitive inspiration in all humans.

Demon Possession?

The film version of *The Exorcist,* a novel by William Peter Blatty, has precipitated a variety of reactions ranging from highly emotional responses by viewers to the guarded approval of several Catholic priests (*Los Angeles Times,* Jan. 21). One spokesman expressed the opinion that renewed belief in the Devil would send people back to the Church. Another priest, more cautious, said:

> It all depends. It might be the thing that pushes someone back into a relationship with God, though that doesn't happen in the movie. The mother is an atheist. She ends up at the end of the movie believing in the devil but not in God.
>
> I'd say the film is good entertainment in the sense it uses all the old things—windows blowing open, candles going out, chains rattling. But for someone to go to it, I would say they at least should have their head on straight or it's going to cause us more problems than it's worth.

He concluded:

> I would say I have an open mind to the existence of different kinds of spirits—even visitors from other planets. But I think the most prudent thing to do is act as if we are on our own.

"No Excuse"

Andrew Kelly, an English professor at UCLA, basing his objections on an interview with the "exorcist" who inspired the book, found the film treatment likely to cause severe psychic reactions among those susceptible to suggestion. He told the *Times* reporter that the film had little resemblance to the case on which Blatty based his book:

> In 1949, a 14-year-old Lutheran boy living in Washington, D.C., began to be bothered by poltergeist phenomena, objects flying about the room, Kelly said. Similar phenomena—caused by psychic energy moving physical objects at a distance—has since been observed. It most often afflicts adolescents at the emotional onset of puberty. The boy's Lutheran pastor could offer no explanation.
>
> When one day the words *Go St. Louis* were found outlined

in red welts on the boy's thigh, it was decided to take him to the attention of a Jesuit at St. Louis University. "Without further ado, without any investigation of any sort, without any consultation with the boy, the archbishop ordered Father William Bowdern to begin exorcism. So this belies the implications in the movie that the case was seriously investigated. There was no excuse for beginning exorcism even by the criteria of the Roman ritual."

Milton's Creation?

When the priest started the rite of exorcism, Prof. Kelly said, the boy began to have convulsions. (He was examined by psychologists, who could find no evidence of any unusual happenings.) The ritual continued for 35 days—the movie telescopes it into one dramatic night—after which the boy returned to normal. Prof. Kelly makes some critical observations about the representation of "possession" by a personified devil, and the *Times* writer observes: "It was not until Milton gave him the leading role in 'Paradise Lost' that Lucifer, a creation of the demonology of the Middle Ages, emerged as the Devil with a capital D." The favorable response to this film by Catholic theologians suggests a rereading of "Theosophy or Jesuitism?" by H. P. Blavatsky. This article is made pertinent by the comment on *The Exorcist* by a member of the Jesuit order, who said: "Once we truly and fully accept the existence of Satan in our lives, the reality of God becomes not only a theological necessity but a psychological one as well." Some day, perhaps, even the newspapers will consult the logical explanations of such psychical phenomena to be found in the Theosophical doctrines, instead of interviewing persons all too eager to revive the beliefs and interpretations of the Dark Ages. Meanwhile, the small epidemic of psychism produced by this film should inspire at least some caution in movie-makers.

Other "Signs of the Times"

The *Wall Street Journal* (Nov. 16, 1973) reported a recent instance of what the U.S. Public Health Service describes as mass hysteria, noting that the phenomenon dates back to the Middle Ages, with numerous examples in modern times. For seven days last May, an epidemic spread through an elementary school in Alabama, reducing a third of the pupils to a frenzy of scratching, vomiting, numbness, crying and screaming. Investigation by state and federal authorities ruled out as causes of the sudden malady

such possibilities as a virus infection or pollution from some environmental factor. Researchers from the University of Alabama noted that only those students who had seen someone else with the malady became afflicted. Younger students or those in special classes did not fall victim. Results of a questionnaire indicated that the children suffering symptoms "tended to be more sensitive, to break down more under stress, to be attention seekers and more demanding." Girls were far more susceptible than boys.

Calling this outbreak "hysteria" does nothing to explain the mysterious nature of the human psyche. H.P.B.'s discussion in *Isis Unveiled* (I, 370) of instances of psychic irruptions, including prophesying among infants and ignorant French peasants during the Middle Ages, suggests how varied and little understood are the properties of the astral principle. It seems evident that susceptibility to psychic infection is closely related to how much knowledge and control we have of ourselves as individuals.

"Language of Cosmic Analogy"

While the lyric beauty of the poems of William Blake is known to many, the symbolism of his "prophetic" works, paintings, and engravings remains a puzzle for most people. A great help in understanding him will be found in Kathleen Raine's two-volume study, *Blake and Tradition*, published in 1968 by Princeton University Press as part of the Bollingen Series. Her work is a detailed showing of Blake's sources in Neoplatonic doctrines, which he learned mainly from Thomas Taylor, whom he knew intimately. But Blake was an omniverous reader, as one soon discovers in this work, and he found inspiration in other mystical sources, not to speak of his own inner experience, which was rich throughout his life. Miss Raine has a good passage explaining why so many find Blake difficult to comprehend:

> In an age whose dominant philosophy is some one or another of the several current forms of materialism, the arts cease to perform their normal function. In ignorance of the language of cosmic analogy (and what else is true poetry but such a language?) some form of humanism or naturalistic "realism" usurps every field of thought. Works of the past are misread in the light of this novel opinion, with a consequent distortion of judgment that necessarily leads to the deposing of what has been thought high and an exaltation of what was formerly thought low.

Uses of Symbolism

> If, for example, Shelley's symbolic language of analogy be read (as, at the present time, is often the case) as descriptive merely of natural appearances, Shelley becomes scarcely distinguishable from Swinburne. Blake, so read, grandly defies comprehension altogether. But poets who in humanist terms are condemned because they neither describe natural appearances nor express personal feelings prove, in terms of this lost symbolic language, to be making statements of quite another kind. . . . These poets are found to be least personal where they have been thought most so, and greatest when least "original." For those very elements of their thought and symbolic language in which they are least personal and most orthodox, Yeats has been called eccentric and Blake mad. . . .
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> It may be asked of what use is poetry whose symbolic language does not communicate its meaning immediately to the reader. The answer is that such a poetry is not meant simply to stimulate the emotions; it summons to an understanding. It therefore makes demands on the reader's intelligence similar to those made on the poet himself. If we do not respond to these demands, the fault is ours and does not lie in the poetry. The traditional language of symbols remains always intrinsically intelligible.

Aids to Understanding

There are many passages like this one in Kathleen Raine's work on Blake. But why, some may ask, write in symbols? Why impose on the reader the need to become familiar with this "traditional language"? Perhaps a paragraph from *The Secret Doctrine* will be helpful in considering this question:

> To some extent, it is admitted that even the esoteric teaching is allegorical. To make the latter comprehensible to the average intelligence, requires the use of symbols cast in an intelligible form. Hence the allegorical and semi-mythical narratives in the exoteric, and the (only) *semi*-metaphysical and objective representations in the esoteric teachings. For the purely and transcendentally spiritual conceptions are adapted only to the perceptions of those who "see without eyes, hear without ears, and sense without organs," according to the graphic expression of the Commentary. (II, 81.)